

CAN THE NAUGHTY NURSE THREATEN LIVES?

The “naughty nurse” image remains a cultural staple. Should you care?

We think so. Linking sexual images closely to nursing reinforces long-standing stereotypes. Of course, most people today probably don't think the average nurse goes to work looking for sex! But the fusing of lingerie with nurses' work uniforms, the frequent exposure of sexy “nurses” bodies, and even the fantasy idea that nurses are sexually available to patients and physicians still associate nursing with sex, not skill. The naughty nurse stereotype discourages practicing and potential nurses. And it fosters sexual abuse in the workplace.

Nurses today often do not get the staffing and other resources they need to save lives. And stereotypes add to the underfunding of nursing research, education, and clinical practice. Physician residencies get *375 times* as much funding as nursing residencies do! Modern nursing is complex, and nurses need advanced training. But health care decision-makers are less likely to devote scarce resources to a profession that has become so degraded in the public's mind. And research shows that naughty nurse images in particular affect how people think about nursing.

The devaluation of nursing translates into a profession that may not be strong enough to save lives when we need it to do so. The “naughty nurse” isn't going to catch deadly medication errors, intervene when a patient is about to crash, or teach a patient to survive with a life-threatening condition.

Help us strengthen nursing and patient care. You can be as “naughty” as you wish, but please consider whether being a naughty *nurse* is a good idea. And take a look at why media stereotypes harm nurses and their patients at TruthAboutNursing.org. Thank you!

